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ABSTRACT

This handbook provides an introduction to research findings related to bilingualism in minority-language children, and describes the implications of these findings for issues of current concern in Canadian education. Bilingualism is defined as the production and/or comprehension of two languages by the same individual. The phrase "minority-language children" refers to children whose first language is different from the language of the wider community. The topic is discussed under five headings: (1) issues dealing with bilingual and bicultural education, providing for instruction in a variety of languages, psychological and educational ramifications, and a case study; (2) the historical perspective and the context for bilingualism and bilingual education at present in Canada and in other countries; (3) a presentation of research findings and a consideration of the patterns of bilingualism and cultural identity typically developed by minority children; (4) a review of theories related to learning two languages and a formulation of a cognitive "think tank model" for language learning; and (5) a consideration of the practical implications of the research findings for "heritage-language" teachers and minority parents who are eager to promote a high level of first language proficiency. The book concludes with a summary of what is known about bilingualism and children's development. (AMH)

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Bilingualism and Minority-Language Children

Jim Cummins

Language and Literacy Series

General Editors

Jim Cummins
Sharon Lapkin
Merrill Swain

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Foreword

Discussions on "language across the curriculum" have become commonplace among educators since the publication of the Bullock Report *A Language for Life* (London, HMSO, 1975) in 1975. The central argument of the Bullock Report – that the teaching of language should be integrated with all aspects of the school curriculum – is now widely accepted, and many teachers, principals, and administrators are currently working to develop and implement school language policies.

However, the phenomenon of language, which seems relatively straightforward when we take it for granted and just use it, becomes enormously complex when we begin to analyse it in depth and probe the relationships between what are generally regarded as its component parts, that is, listening, speaking, reading, and writing. For example, most educators assume that a good basis in "oral language" is necessary for successful initial reading; yet research findings on this issue are not entirely consistent, some showing strong relationships between reading and oral language skills, while others find only weak relationships. The reason for this, of course, is that the term "oral language" can encompass a bewildering array of different skills whose interrelationships are anything but clear. For example, how is the grammatical accuracy of speech related to appropriateness of use in different contexts, or range of vocabulary related to fluency?

The relationships between reading and writing are no more clear than those between "oral language" and reading, with educational theorists and researchers proposing several different views. While the four broad language skills are obviously interrelated in some ways, there are other ways in which they are clearly independent; for example, knowing how to speak does not guarantee that a child will be successful in acquiring reading and writing skills. What this implies for educators is that without a clear conception of the nature of "language proficiency," and the ways in which its component parts are related to each other, it becomes extremely difficult to formulate a coherent policy on how language should be integrated with other aspects of the curriculum.

Issues related to language and literacy become even murkier when we add concerns about second-language acquisition and first-language maintenance among both children from linguistic minorities as well as those from the majority language group. As a re-

sult of considerable research during the past two decades we can be reasonably confident about some educational generalizations in regard to second-language programs. For example, we know that French immersion programs are considerably more effective in promoting French skills than traditional French-as-a-second-language programs. However, when we probe beneath the surface of these research studies, we are faced with the same issues that remain largely unresolved in first-language pedagogy. For example, the question of how long it takes an immigrant child to learn English, which has obvious policy implications both for the provision of ESL services and for psychological assessment, depends upon what we mean by "learning English." Understanding *why* immersion programs succeed in developing second-language skills so much more rapidly than traditional second-language programs involves understanding the nature of language and how it is acquired in first-language contexts.

The aim of the present series is to assist educators (including parents) to explore these issues concerning the nature and development of language and literacy. We hope not only to provide information in a straightforward and accessible form, but also to stimulate ideas and discussion about how the information or "facts" are related to each other and how they can be explained. In other words, we hope to stimulate the process of developing and refining theory because "facts" become relevant for both policy and practice only when they are integrated within a coherent theoretical framework.

All educational policy and practice is based on theory. Often, however, these theories are implicit, or are based on assumptions whose validity is questionable. One of the reasons for this is that researchers publish their findings in scholarly journals in a language that can often be understood only by other researchers. Practitioners are therefore largely excluded from access to these findings. Consequently, and appropriately, they base their practice on assumptions and intuitions derived from experience. However, implicit theories or assumptions unsupported by data are usually not sufficient to persuade others that changes in policy or practice are desirable. Information that can be generalized is required. Such information can serve either to confirm assumptions and intuitions or alternatively to cause them to be questioned.

Thus, we hope that the present series of monographs will contribute to the generation of new theoretical ideas and practical applications in the general areas of language and literacy. Although each monograph is devoted to a specific issue, we anticipate that collectively they will help define the dimensions of language and literacy in both bilingual and monolingual contexts.

Jim Cummins
Sharon Lapkin
Merrill Swain
Series Editors

Preface

The purpose of this handbook is to provide a brief introduction to research findings related to bilingualism in minority-language children, and to describe the implications of these findings for issues of current concern in Canadian education. The term "bilingualism" is defined in a broad sense as "the production and/or comprehension of two languages by the same individual" in order to include within the scope of the handbook the large variety of proficiencies in two languages manifested by minority children. The term "minority-language children" refers to children whose first language or home language (L1) is different from the language of the wider community and its schools (L2). Thus, francophone children outside Quebec in either French or English schools are included in this definition, but children from, for example, Ukrainian cultural backgrounds who are exposed only to English at home would not be included even if they were attending a Ukrainian-English bilingual program. This definition of "minority-language children" must be interpreted fairly loosely since children may be exposed to varying amounts of both languages in the home and in some cases may be more proficient in L2 than in L1 on entry to school.

However, despite its looseness, this definition serves to delineate the general scope of the handbook and also its potential audience. The primary audiences envisaged are educational personnel (heritage-language teachers, ESL teachers, "regular" teachers, teachers-in-training, psychologists, administrators, and policy-makers) directly concerned with the education of first- and second-generation minority-language students, although the handbook is also obviously relevant to parents and ethnic community leaders concerned with preserving heritage languages.

Some third-generation students may come within the definition of "minority-language children" employed earlier; however, these are exceptions to the rule and are thus not a primary concern of the handbook. Nevertheless, many of the principles of bilingualism and bilingual education considered in the handbook may be relevant to educators involved in bilingual or other heritage-language programs for these children. Thus, I would encourage readers to take an eclectic approach to the content of the handbook, choosing what is relevant to their own individual situations and being

tolerant of what is more relevant to other types of bilingual learning situations.

Although the Canadian context provides the primary focus for the handbook, the issues discussed are also relevant to the education of minority students in many other countries. In order to place the Canadian issues into a broader international context, I have drawn on research conducted outside Canada where this illustrates principles of bilingual education for which Canadian research is lacking.

Finally, I would like to thank all those who provided feedback and encouragement on an earlier version of this handbook; specifically, Roma Chumak, Miriam di Giuseppe, George Duravetz, Marcela Duran, Normand Frenette, Daina Green, Steve Krashen, Jean Handscombe, Sharon Lapkin, Dorothy Legaretta, and Merrill Swain. I would also like gratefully to acknowledge the artistic work of John Lasruk, whose illustrations serve to simultaneously lighten the text and highlight its message. The suggestions of two anonymous external reviewers were also very useful.

Jim Cummins

1

Issues

During the past fifteen years in Canada, as in many of the other western industrialized countries, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of students whose home language (L1) is other than that of the school (L2). More than 50 percent of the school population in several Metro Toronto school systems do not have English as an L1, while in the Vancouver school system the figure (at the elementary level) is around 40 percent. This rapid increase in the number of minority-language students has given rise to considerable debate about how Canadian school systems should respond to the cultural and linguistic diversity of their students. Attempts to improve the teaching of English-as-a-second-language (ESL) or French-as-a-second-language (FSL) in Quebec, and to increase the sensitivity of school personnel to children's cultural background have been relatively uncontroversial. However, issues related to the teaching of languages other than English and French within the public school system have been extremely contentious.

This debate has taken place at several levels. At a social/political level, discussion has centred on the role of the school in maintaining ethnic languages and cultures. On the one hand, a major concern identified in the public response to the Draft Report of the Work Group on Multiculturalism (1975) in the Toronto Board of Education was that: "The school system's new responsiveness to 'ethnic demands' in the area of language and culture will create ghettos. People must assimilate to the 'Canadian way of life'."[1] Those in favor of an expansion of teaching ethnic languages, on the other hand, argued that a policy of multiculturalism which divorces culture from language is merely a sham.

The administrative and financial difficulties of providing instruction in a large variety of languages have also been frequently advanced as an argument against any change in the linguistic status quo. By contrast, advocates of teaching ethnic languages in the elementary school have argued that these difficulties are by no means insurmountable, given a willingness on the part of politicians and educators to regard ethnic language development as a societal and educational priority.

The third level concerns the psychological and educational ramifications of minority students' bilingualism and biculturalism. Among the concerns identified in the response

to the Toronto Board Draft Report was the danger that: "Language maintenance or development programs in the schools, other than French or English, will retard the English language development of ethnic minority children, and they will impede English language development of the ethnic minority community themselves."[2] By contrast, it has been argued by others that incorporating minority students' L1 into the school curriculum will help students achieve a comfortable adjustment to both the home and school cultures as well as promote an educationally beneficial form of bilingualism.

This handbook is addressed to these psychoeducational issues. In the past decade considerable research has been carried out on bilingualism in minority students and on its relationship to the development of academic skills. The following specific issues have been researched and will be considered in the present handbook:

1. How do minority-language students perform academically in English-only programs?
2. How do minority-language students adjust to the often conflicting demands of home and school cultures?
3. Does the teaching of minority students' L1 in the elementary school interfere with the learning of English and other academic skills?
4. What effects does bilingualism have on children's cognitive and academic development?
5. Do bilingual children have an advantage in learning additional languages?
6. What are the effects of using L1 in the home on the learning of English and other academic skills?

Research information on these issues has not been reflected up to now in public debates on the teaching of heritage languages and has had little impact on the training of school personnel concerned with minority students (for example, ESL teachers, psychologists, and so on). Consequently, it is not surprising that the attitudes of school personnel and policy-makers have been based largely on "common sense" assumptions rather than empirical evidence. In the apparent absence of any evidence to the contrary, it did not seem unreasonable to assume that if minority students had deficiencies in English, then they needed instruction in English, not in their L1. Currently, many teachers perceive the promotion of heritage languages in the school as undermining their efforts to teach children English. Because they feel that the learning of English will be facilitated if children are gradually weaned away from their L1, these teachers tend to encourage parents to use English as much as possible in the home. Parents of minority children will often accept this advice and try to use English in communicating with their children because they fear that the use of L1 may confuse children and reduce their chances of academic success.

These assumptions about the inhibiting effects of minority students' L1 on the learning of English emerged clearly in the public debate following the Toronto Board's Draft Report on Multiculturalism. For example, a report headlined "Too much stress on ethnic studies city teachers say" in the Toronto Star (October 19, 1976) summarized the opposition of school personnel to the teaching of heritage languages as follows:

> Many of the Toronto Board of Education's principals, teachers and superintendents are

> opposed to the board's policy of helping ethnic groups maintain their own language and culture in the schools, a survey has found. . . . [M]any among the school staff are confused about the policy, feel it will lead to the creation of ghettos and that the schools are already over-burdened.
>
> "Canada should come first and the other nationality second, otherwise they should not have come here," said a school principal.
>
> Another principal said the majority of teachers are opposed to the policy because "if you let them (students) use their own language, they will never learn English."

Some parents in the ethnic communities themselves have shared these concerns about the teaching of heritage languages. Realizing that proficiency in English is a prerequisite to academic success, parents have been concerned that any time taken away from English will interfere with their children's academic progress. A report in the *Toronto Star* (October 3, 1975) headlined "Immigrant parents ask city to push English in the schools" quoted an ethnic parent as saying that

> Immigrants want their children forced to speak English at school, not given special programs in their own language . . . if native languages are used at school, it only makes it harder for children to learn English.

These views obviously do not represent those of the majority of ethnic parents who have strongly supported the teaching of heritage languages in the public school. However, they do illustrate the fear among some parents that the use of L1, either in home or school, will have an adverse effect on the learning of English.

The prevalence of these assumptions among teachers and the general public raises the questions first, of their validity, and second, of their effects on the treatment of minority-language students in schools. On the basis of the research outlined in Chapter 3 it will be argued that these "common sense" assumptions are based on misconceptions about the nature of bilingualism which, in the past, have contributed directly to the academic and cultural adjustment difficulties of minority students.

A concrete example will illustrate the ways in which "common sense" assumptions about minority students' bilingualism and home experience in L1 find expression within the school system to the potential detriment of students' educational development. This example is taken from a recent study in which the teacher referral forms and psychological assessments of over four hundred New Canadian students were analysed.[3]

The Case of Maria. Maria (not child's real name) was referred for psychological assessment by her first-grade teacher who noted that she has difficulty in all aspects of learning. Maria was given both speech and hearing and psychological assessments. The former assessment found that all structures and functions pertaining to speech were within normal limits and hearing was also normal. The findings were summarized as follows: "Maria comes from an Italian home where Italian is spoken mainly. However, language skills appeared to be within normal limits for English."

The psychologist's conclusions, however, were very different. On the Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence (WPPSI), Maria obtained a Verbal IQ of 89 (23rd percentile) and a Performance (nonverbal) IQ of 99 (47th percentile). The Full Scale IQ was 93 (32nd percentile). The report to Maria's teacher read as follows:

> Maria tended to be very slow to respond to questions, particularly if she were unsure of the answers. Her spoken English was a little hard to understand, which is probably due to poor English models at home (speech is within normal limits). Italian is spoken almost exclusively at home, and *this will be further complicated* [emphasis added] by the coming arrival of an aunt and grandmother from Italy.

> There is little doubt that Maria is a child of low average ability whose school progress is impeded by lack of practice in English. Encourage Maria's oral participation as much as possible, and try to involve Maria in extra-curricular activities where she will be with her English-speaking peers.

In this example, the psychologist has no hesitation ("There is little doubt") in deciding that Maria is a child of low average ability on the basis of a test whose validity for a child from a non-English background is highly questionable, nor in attributing Maria's academic problems to the use of Italian in the home. The implicit message to the teacher is clear: Maria's communication in Italian with parents and relatives detracts from her school performance, and the aim of the school program should be to expose Maria to as much English as possible in order to compensate for these deficient linguistic and cultural background experiences.

Although this orientation towards minority children's bilingualism is not typical of the psychological assessments analysed in this study, it is by no means an isolated instance. Comments such as the following reveal the same orientation:

> Basically Mario (not child's real name) has some very significant language problems. The family speaks Italian at home, and is not especially capable of supporting Mario at home with reading and conversation.
>
> Italian is still spoken at home but they are trying to use more English.
>
> Since Italian is the primary language spoken in the home, it was felt that the slight language delay was due to a lack of stimulation in the home environment.

The implicit attitude expressed in these comments is that reading and conversation can qualify as "stimulation" only if they occur in English.

The point I wish to make is that assumptions about the use of minority students' L1 in school and home which have been commonly expressed in the policy debates on multicultural programs are by no means innocuous; on the contrary, they emerge in the concrete everyday decisions made by classroom teachers, psychologists, and administrators. Before considering the research related to these assumptions, the issues will be considered from a historical perspective and placed within the context of recent developments in the education of minority students, both in Canada and internationally.

2

Context

Historical Perspective

The prevailing attitude towards ethnic diversity in Canada in the first half of this century has been termed "Anglo-conformity." It was assumed that all ethnic groups should give up their own languages and cultures and become assimilated into the dominant British culture. Harney and Troper in their book *Immigrants* quote a speaker at the 1913 Pre-Assembly Congress of the Presbyterian Church in Toronto:

> The problem is simply this: take all the different nationalities, German, French, Italian, Russian and all the others that are sending their surplus into Canada; mix them with the Anglo-Saxon stock and produce a uniform race wherein the Anglo-Saxon peculiarities shall prevail.[1]

5

Education was naturally regarded as a major means of Canadianizing "foreign" students. As Harney and Troper point out, Canadianization was not a hidden curriculum but permeated every facet of the school's program. Any traces of foreign values were eradicated in the process of impressing on students the Canadian values of "punctuality, regularity, obedience, industry, cleanliness, decency of appearance and behaviour, regard for the rights of others and respect for law and order."[2] Harney and Troper provide an example which vividly illustrates the subtle ways in which a gulf can be created between a child and his/her family:

> The teacher was also charged with systematically instructing these foreign students in the ways of the New World, a process which often dismissed the Old World ways as backward, as un-Canadian. . . .
>
> Even personal hygiene programs could undermine the house. Every morning, for instance, the teacher systematically went up and down the classroom inspecting each student's hands and fingernails for that last trace of dirt which defied the morning wash. A villainous bit of grime would temporarily banish a student to the school sink amid disapproving looks from teacher and schoolmates. As the teacher makes her inspection rounds the daughter of a Macedonian workman remembers looking at her father's hands during dinner – hands that prodded cattle from a stockyard to abattoir before cleaning out stock pens. There seems no allowance can be made. Saintliness is measured by the cleanliness of fingernails. A father is condemned.[3]

Given the strong emphasis on Anglo-conformity in the schools, it is not surprising that bilingualism came to be regarded as a negative force in children's development. Many North American educators saw bilingualism almost as a disease which not only interfered with the Canadianization or Americanization process, but also caused confusion in children's thinking. Therefore, they felt that a precondition for teaching children English was the eradication of their bilingualism. Thus, children were often punished for speaking their L1 in school and were made to feel ashamed of their own language and cultural background. It is not surprising that research studies conducted during this period often found that bilingual children did poorly at school and many

experienced emotional conflicts. Some researchers even went so far as to claim that bilingualism led to schizophrenic tendencies and that bilinguals were morally untrustworthy![4] Results such as these are attributable both to poor research designs in many of the early studies as well as to the fact that children were made to feel that it was necessary to reject the home culture in order to belong to the majority culture, and often ended up unable to identify with either cultural group.

BUREAU OF NATURALIZATION
DO YOU HAVE A PRISON RECORD? ARE YOU A MEMBER OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY? DO YOU SUFFER FROM BILINGUALISM OR ANY OTHER COMMUNICATIVE DISEASE?

As outlined in Table 1, any emotional conflicts or difficulties in learning English which minority students experienced under these "sink or swim" conditions were usually attributed to some deficiency within the child. Various "scientific" explanations were suggested as to why minority children tended to perform poorly at school; for example, confusion in thinking due to bilingualism, cultural deprivation, and even genetic inferiority. Research showing that bilingual children performed lower on verbal IQ tests than monolingual children was interpreted by many researchers and educators to mean that there is only so much space or capacity available in our brains for language; therefore, if we divide that space between two languages, neither language will develop properly and intellectual confusion will result.

In summary, the strong opposition to the use of ethnic languages in public elementary schools that has emerged in recent debates on multiculturalism is a manifestation of a long tradition of Anglo-conformity in Canadian education. Psychoeducational arguments that bilingualism and/or L1 maintenance will impede the learning of English, although genuinely believed by many educators, have seized on minority students' own language and culture as a convenient scapegoat, while at the same time absolving the school from any responsibility in the educational failure of many of these students.

Recent research evidence (considered in Chapter 3) undermines the validity of these long-held positions, and social and educational attitudes both in Canada and internationally also show evidence of a change in orientation.

Table 1/Blaming the Victim in Minority-Language Education*

A. *Overt Aim* Teach English to minority children in order to create a harmonious society with equal opportunity for all	*Covert Aim* Anglicize minority children because linguistic and cultural diversity are seen as a threat to social cohesion	D. *Outcomes* – Even more intense efforts by the school to eradicate the deficiencies inherent in minority children	– The failure of these efforts only serves to reinforce the myth of minority group deficiencies
B. *Method* Prohibit use of L1 in schools and make children reject their own culture and language in order to identify with majority English group	*Justification* 1. L1 should be eradicated because it will interfere with the learning of English; 2. Identification with L1 culture will reduce child's ability to identify with English-speaking culture	C. *Results* 1. Shame in L1 language and culture 2. Replacement of L1 by L2 3. School failure among many children	*"Scientific" Explanation* 1. Bilingualism causes confusion in thinking, emotional insecurity and school failure 2. Minority group children are "culturally deprived" (almost by definition since they are not Anglos) 3. Some minority-language groups are genetically inferior (common theory in the U.S. in 1920s and 1930s).

**This Table reflects the assumptions of North American school systems in the first half of this century. However, similar assumptions have been made about minority-language children in the school systems of many other countries.*

Recent Canadian Developments

In 1971 the federal government adopted the policy of "multiculturalism within a bilingual framework." Under this policy there are two official languages in Canada – English and French – but all ethnic groups are encouraged to enrich Canadian society by continuing to develop their unique cultures.

The multiculturalism policy is based on the recommendations of Book IV of the Report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism (B & B Report) and represents a major shift in federal policy regarding ethnic diversity. In contrast to "Anglo-conformity," no one culture is "official" or dominant; instead, *all* cultural groups are seen as contributing to building the Canadian identity.

The benefits of *linguistic diversity* to Canadian society were also emphasized in Book IV of the B & B Report. The Report recommended that "the teaching of languages other than English and French, and cultural subjects related to them, be incorporated as options in the public elementary school programme, where there is sufficient demand for such classes" (S378, p. 141). However, the Report also pointed out the practical difficulties which could arise in providing instruction in heritage languages at the elementary level, and cautioned that these languages should not be taught at the expense of the second official language, that is, English or French.

Since education is within the jurisdiction of the provinces, the provincial educational authorities must decide what constitutes "sufficient demand" for heritage-language instruction in the public school system. In recent years, programs of heritage-language instruction have been instituted in the public elementary school systems of several provinces. The principal aims of these programs are to promote the continued vitality of ethnic cultures and to enrich children's educational experience.

In 1971, Alberta became the first province to legalize languages other than English or French as mediums of instruction in the public school system. Currently, bilingual programs involving Ukrainian, German, and Hebrew respectively exist in several elementary schools in Edmonton. In these programs the heritage language is used as the language of instruction for 50 percent of the school day throughout the elementary school. In 1979/80, a total of 1271 students were enrolled in these heritage-language programs, the Ukrainian program being the largest with close to 800 students enrolled between kindergarten and grade 6 in seven Edmonton schools.

In 1979, Manitoba passed enabling legislation permitting the use of non-official languages as languages of instruction for up to 50 percent of the school day. In 1980/81, 320 students were enrolled in the English-Ukrainian bilingual program. Saskatchewan has similar enabling legislation, and an English-Ukrainian bilingual program has also been recently instituted.

In Ontario, it is still not legal to use languages other than English and French as mediums of instruction in the public school system except on a temporary basis to help children acquire English skills. However, in 1977, the Ontario Ministry of Education instituted the Heritage Languages Program under which funding is provided to school boards for the teaching of heritage languages for up to 2½ hours per week outside of the regular 5-hour school day. In 1979-80, there were 76 017 students representing forty-four language groups enrolled in the Heritage Languages Program.

In Quebec, English can be legally used as the language of instruction in the public school system only for children whose parents are English-speaking and who had them-

selves been educated in English schools in Quebec. French is the legal language of instruction for all others. However, in 1978, the programme de l'enseignement des langues d'origine (PELO) was started by the Quebec provincial government. PELO involves teaching Italian, Portuguese, Greek, and Spanish to children of these backgrounds for thirty minutes per day during regular school hours. Approximately six hundred students are currently enrolled under this program.

It is clear that both the numbers of students receiving heritage-language instruction in the public elementary school and the types of programs vary widely across provinces. By contrast, there is relative uniformity of programs for minority francophones in all Canadian provinces. These programs usually vary from between 50 and 80 percent of the day through French from kindergarten through grade 12. For Native peoples, there has been a revival in teaching heritage languages across Canada and some bilingual programs have been started; however, none of these has been systematically evaluated. In addition to these programs operating within the public school system, there are many heritage-language classes operated by the linguistic communities themselves on Saturday mornings or after school hours.

There are two principal rationales for these Canadian programs: first, cultural maintenance, and second, educational enrichment. For the most part, those enrolled in the bilingual programs in Western Canada are third-generation students who are not fluent in the heritage language on entry to the program. Thus, the principal aims of the programs are to revive the language and help students appreciate their cultural heritage. As in French immersion programs, however, parents view the acquisition of a second language as an educationally enriching experience, provided, of course, this can be achieved at no cost to students' English language skills.

The same rationales apply to the Ontario and Quebec programs, although there is a much greater proportion of first- and second-generation students in these programs than in their western Canadian counterparts. The Ontario and Quebec programs also involve what can be termed a "survival" rationale, that is, one of the aims of incorporating L1 into the school curriculum is to help minority students to "survive" educationally. It is argued that teaching heritage languages in the public school will help students overcome emotional and academic adjustment difficulties by improving their self-concept and developing some concepts through L1.

Clearly, cultural maintenance, educational enrichment, and survival rationales overlap to a certain extent. However, in contrast to Canadian programs, "survival" is the primary rationale invoked in the United States and Europe for incorporating minority students' L1 into the school curriculum.

International Developments

In both the United States and Europe, recent initiatives in educating minority-language students have arisen in response to the increasing numbers of such students and repeated documentation of their failure under "sink or swim" conditions.

Europe. In Europe, as a result of the economic expansion of the 1960s, it is estimated that there are two million children of migrant workers attending schools in the European Economic Community (EEC).[5] More than 50 percent of these (100 000 each

year) fail to obtain any job qualification at the end of compulsory schooling. The growth in the immigrant student population is such that, if present trends continue, by the year 2000, one-third of the European school population will be of immigrant background.

The seriousness with which these trends are viewed can be seen in the following comment from an official EEC document:

> Unless the Member States take immediate action on a scale commensurate with the number of immigrants, their educational systems will continue to filter out second-generation migrants into a sub-proletariat whose resentment will rapidly create an explosive situation.[6]

Some social scientists have charged that the low levels of L1 and L2 literacy achieved by many minority students is not entirely dysfunctional for the host countries in that it ensures a continuous supply of cheap labor. This interpretation is expressed by a Finnish researcher, Tove Skutnabb-Kangas, in a paper whose title reads as follows: "Semilingualism and the education of migrant children as a means of reproducing the caste of assembly-line workers."[7] She recommends strong promotion of minority students' L1 in the school system as a means of overcoming "semilingualism" and achieving high levels of literacy in both languages.

The teaching of L1 is also regarded by the EEC as an important means of promoting educational survival for immigrant students:

> No one now disputes that the successful integration of immigrants into the host countries' schools requires special education measures. The great innovation of recent years is that the mother tongue is now regarded as a significant component of the child's personality, which is crucial to his psychological wellbeing and facilitates integration into a new environment.[8]

This statement reflects a significant change in educational policy within the EEC. In 1977 the EEC issued a directive on the education of the children of migrant workers which required member states by 1981 to "take appropriate measures to promote, in co-ordination with normal education, teaching of the mother tongue and culture of the country of origin. . . ."[9]

Similar changes in educational policy have occurred in Sweden, which is not a member of the EEC. In 1977, it became obligatory for municipalities to offer L1 instruction when requested by minority groups. In 1977/78, 41 percent of immigrant students received L1 instruction, while 16 percent received subject-matter instruction through the medium of L1.

The United States. In the United States, bilingual education for minority-language children has expanded rapidly during the past decade, although there is still considerable controversy about its goals and methods. This expansion followed a landmark decision (Lau vs. Nichols, 1974) in which the Supreme Court upheld the contention of a Chinese family that their child was denied access to equal educational opportunity because he was not sufficiently proficient in English to profit from instruction in that language. Bilingual education, in which students are given instruction partially through L1 until they have attained sufficient proficiency in English to benefit from English instruction, was the principal remedy recommended by the Office of Civil Rights in response to the Supreme Court decision. School districts found to be out of compliance with the "Lau guidelines" can be denied access to federal education funds.

This far-reaching decision has come at a time when the number of minority-language

students is increasing while general school enrolment continues to decline. For example, minority-language students comprise approximately 6 percent (3.6 million) of the entire school-age population of the United States, and 69 percent of these are of Hispanic background. In Los Angeles, it is estimated that the Hispanic population will comprise over 50 percent of the school-age population by 1985.

Minority-language students, especially Hispanic and Native groups, have been characterized by high drop-out rates and poor academic achievement. There are approximately twice as many Mexican-American students in classes for the educable mentally retarded as would be expected on the basis of proportion in the school population, and Hispanics have been found to perform consistently ten to fifteen percentage points below the national average in academic achievement.[10] By the end of grade 6, Native students in English-only programs have been found to be about two years below national norms in English reading.

Although many individual bilingual programs have had considerable success in improving minority students' academic performance, there has not been any demonstration that bilingual education is reducing inequality of educational opportunity on the large scale that was originally envisaged. This is due, in part at least, to the problems school districts have encountered in implementing bilingual programs. Lack of qualified teachers and suitable materials, as well as widespread confusion about the goals and methods of bilingual education, have resulted in considerable variation in the quality of bilingual programs.

Thus, policy-makers and the general public remain sceptical about the merits of bilingual education. The issues in the current U.S. debate parallel those in the Canadian context. It is frequently argued that bilingual education will promote fragmentation of society and Quebec-style separatism and, at a psychoeducational level, that if minority students are deficient in English, then they need instruction in English, not in their L1.

In summary, the shift towards more widespread teaching of minority students' L1 in the public school system is motivated primarily by cultural development and educational enrichment rationales in Canada and by an educational survival rationale in Europe and the United States. However, at both a sociopolitical and psychoeducational level, the issues in the public debates have been similar in their contexts, and, in general, research has played a minimal role in these debates. However, considerable research relevant to the psychoeducational issues has been carried out during the past five years. This research is outlined in Chapter 3.

3

Research Findings

Patterns of Bilingualism and Cultural Identity among Minority Children

In order to understand research findings regarding the academic achievement of minority children, it is necessary first to consider the patterns of bilingualism and cultural identity typically developed by minority children.

Bilingualism

Among minority children in Canada there is typically a strong tendency to replace L1 with English. This is largely because children are constantly bombarded by stimulation in English – on TV, on the street, with their friends. This pattern can be seen clearly in the following account from a recent book published in Toronto called *Come With Us* in which children's perceptions of Canadian society were explored.

> My Family is From Macedonia
>
> I'm Macedonian. It's different from English. At school I talk English, except in French class in the afternoon. At home my mom asks me a question in Macedonian and I answer in English. My mom and my grandmother talk in Macedonian. That means if I get interested in what they are saying, I have to talk and listen in Macedonian. When me and my brother talk and my mother wants to know what we are talking about, we explain it in Macedonian.
>
> As far as language is concerned, I'm pretty good at speaking Macedonian for a kid that talks English the whole day.[1]

The pattern illustrated in this excerpt is perhaps the most common one among New Canadian students; they maintain basic comprehension skills in L1, but gradually lose their ability to speak L1. It often happens that children start school fully competent in speaking and understanding their L1, but within a short time brothers and sisters start speaking English together, and then they become unwilling to speak L1 at home. For some children there is an almost complete shift of language during the school years; they start school unilingual in their L1 and leave school virtually unilingual in English. Other children maintain basic speaking and listening skills in L1, but they do not develop L1 literacy skills and may not feel comfortable discussing complex ideas in L1. In speaking L1 they may frequently switch to English and use English words and expressions.

Finally, there are children who manage to develop high levels of speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills in both languages. However, *full bilingualism does not develop automatically* and will usually only be possible when parents take special steps to encourage children to develop L1 proficiency (see Chapter 5).

Cultural Identity

The patterns of bilingualism which minority children develop are very closely tied to their attitudes towards their two languages and also towards the two cultural groups that speak these languages. Refusal to speak L1 is usually part of a rejection of all family values which make children feel "different" from their classmates. Children of all ages, but especially at adolescence, have a strong need to belong – to fit in with the group. If they feel their family language and culture are not accepted by classmates, teachers, and others in the wider society with whom they have contact, they will often feel ashamed and try to hide the fact that their background is "different." This is why children are sometimes embarrassed when their parents speak L1 outside the home.

All adolescents go through a process of choosing an identity – deciding what their values and beliefs are and what sort of person they want to become. For minority-language students this task of choosing who to be is complicated by the fact that they have grown up in two cultural milieux – that of the home and that of the wider society – whose values are often very different.

Wallace Lambert of McGill University in Montreal, one of the world's leading authorities on bilingualism, has distinguished four possible ways in which minority students can work out conflicts between the language and culture (L & C) of the home and those of the school:[2]

(1) Rejection of home L & C, identification with Canadian L & C
(2) Rejection of Canadian L & C, identification with home L & C
(3) Inability to identify comfortably with either home or Canadian L & C
(4) Identification with both home and Canadian L & C

The first alternative is probably the most common way in which minority students try to cope with conflicts between the language and culture of the home and those of the wider society. Students feel embarrassed by their own background and try to speed up their assimilation into Canadian life. This pattern has both positive and negative consequences. On the positive side, the urge to identify with the majority group will usually lead to rapid acquisition of English skills; however, this is often achieved at the cost of familial harmony, since the rejection both of family values and the L1 can cause much conflict between parents and children. Resolving this conflict is made more difficult by the fact that children and parents may no longer have a common language with which to discuss the problem. Children's competence in L1 may not have developed much since starting English-only school at age six. While it may be adequate for communication on concrete everyday matters, children may not have the vocabulary in their L1 for discussing their complex feelings and personal problems. Parents, however, may not feel comfortable discussing these questions in English.

The second way in which students cope with cultural conflicts is through proudly holding on to the traditional values of their home culture and rejecting the values of the wider society. Assimilation into the wider society will be resisted, and individuals will tend to associate mainly with members of their own ethnic group.

The third pattern leaves the student caught between two cultural groups and unable to identify comfortably with either. The values of the home culture are often discredited, but the student is unable (or not permitted) to become integrated into the wider society.

Students who conform to the fourth pattern retain pride in their home culture as well as in Canadian culture as a whole and feel able to identify with both. Ideally, students will be able to see the strengths and weaknesses of both cultures and use the strengths of both as a foundation for choosing their own values and identities. From the point of view of language learning, these students are likely to be motivated to develop fully their proficiency in both English and their L1.

In the process of resolving cultural conflicts and choosing an identity, minority students may go through stages involving more than one of these patterns. For example, students may initially reject the home language and culture in their efforts to fit in with the dominant cultural group. Later, however, they may realize that it is possible to belong to *both* cultural groups and that becoming fully Canadian does not necessarily entail rejection of one's own cultural group. On the negative side, many individuals who end up conforming to the third pattern of failure to identify with either group may initially have tried to gain acceptance by the majority group through rejecting the home language and culture. However, if they are not accepted by the majority group, despite their efforts to assimilate, they have nowhere left to go.

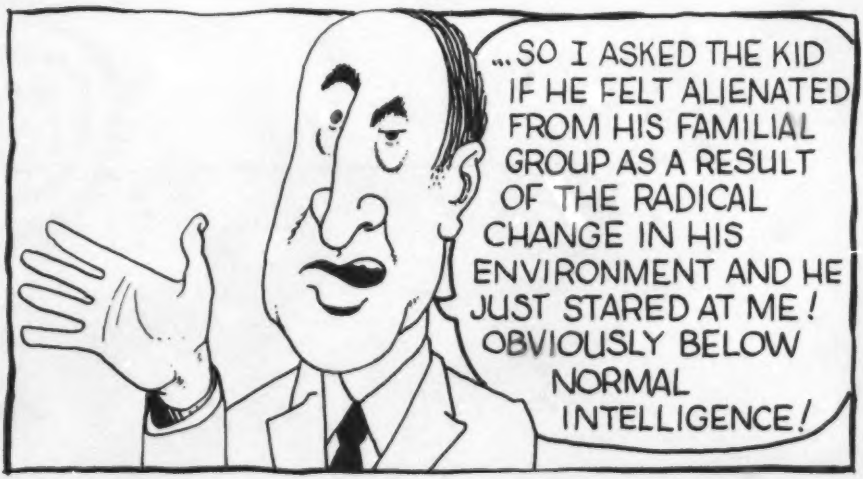
It has frequently been emphasized that the fourth pattern of adjustment involving harmonious identification with the cultures of both the home and the wider society is the one which will benefit society and the individual the most. Wallace Lambert, for example, argues that minority-language groups

> should be encouraged from as many sources as possible to maintain their dual heritage . . . they are North America's richest human resource . . . I don't think they will be able to be fully North American unless they are given every possibility of being fully French, Portuguese, Spanish, or whatever as well.[3]

Maria Vera Corsini, writing about Italian minority-language children, also points out that these children will develop fully only when they accept and become proud of their home language and culture:

> The rejection of their past, of their roots, of an embarrassing background, deprives them of the necessary foundation on which to make choices, and this makes them insecure and anxious. They will grow as persons only when they go back to their roots without shame, and accept them.[4]

The past insensitivity of educators to these identity conflicts has contributed substantially to minority students' adjustment problems and academic difficulties.


...SO I ASKED THE KID IF HE FELT ALIENATED FROM HIS FAMILIAL GROUP AS A RESULT OF THE RADICAL CHANGE IN HIS ENVIRONMENT AND HE JUST STARED AT ME! OBVIOUSLY BELOW NORMAL INTELLIGENCE!

In summary, because the desire to identify with the majority culture is extremely important in learning L2, minority students who conform to patterns 2 or 3 (page 14) will tend to have difficulty learning L2 and will perform poorly in school. They will also not be very comfortable living in a society whose values they reject. Students who attempt to assimilate into the majority culture by rejecting the home language and culture (pattern 1) are likely to learn English without difficulty and may also perform well in school. However, as pointed out above, in terms of personal development, the cost to the individual may be large. Students who identify with the majority culture, but maintain their ties with the home culture (pattern 4), will likewise tend to have little difficulty learning English and performing well in school. However, in contrast to students who reject the home language and culture, these students will have maintained their L1 proficiency and are also likely to have greater potential for personal development and for contributing to Canadian society.

This analysis gives us a basis for understanding research results regarding both the educational performance of minority-language children and the effects of bilingualism on children's educational and intellectual progress. These results suggest that school programs which try to promote adjustment pattern 1 are not necessarily disastrous for minority students whose parents are pushing them towards the majority language and culture and towards high educational achievement. However, for other minority students, these programs may result in adjustment patterns 2 or 3, with consequent low levels of linguistic and academic achievement. Programs which aim to promote adjustment pattern 4 have significant advantages for all minority students and crucial ones for students who would otherwise conform to patterns 2 or 3.

Minority-Language Students' Performance in School

There is considerable variation in the academic performance of different groups of minority-language children. As mentioned previously, research has documented the extremely poor achievement of Hispanic and Native students in the United States and of immigrant students in Europe. This pattern of poor school performance in L2-only school programs has been found both among second- and first-generation minority students. In fact, some studies report that minority students born in the host country have worse academic prospects than immigrant students who have had several years of schooling in the country of origin.[5]

As can be seen in Table 2, a different pattern of achievement seems to emerge for most minority groups in the Canadian context.[6] Minority students born in Canada are overrepresented in the high academic stream compared with students whose L1 is English, whereas minority students born outside Canada are slightly underrepresented in comparison to English-L1 students. The exception to this pattern is the Franco-Ontarian group, which is very much underrepresented in the high academic stream.

An interesting aspect of the data presented in Table 2 is that SES (as assessed by parental occupation) appears considerably more significant for the academic achievement of Canadian-born students from English and French language backgrounds than it does for Canadian-born students from other language backgrounds. It appears likely that immigrant parents, regardless of SES, tend strongly to encourage their children to perform well academically.

Table 2/Class Placement of Secondary School Students in the Toronto Board of Education, 1969 and 1975
Every Student Survey According to Mother Tongue and Place of Birth

Mother Tongue	*Percentage in 5-Year Program (high academic), 1969 Survey*		*Percentage in Level 5 (high academic), 1975 Survey*	
	*SES 2**	*SES Total*	*SES 2*	*SES Total*
1. *Born in Canada*				
Non-English (incl. French)	66	71	62	68
English	41	57	40	61
French	27	38	31	52
2. *Born outside Canada*				
Non-English	44	51	48	56
English	44	57	51	64

** SES 2 = lowest socioeconomic status category based on ratings of parents' occupations*
Source: Wright, 1971; Deosaran, 1976

Other Canadian surveys reveal a similar pattern. For example, a survey, reported in 1968, which involved over ninety thousand Ontario high school students, showed that the retention rate in high school was highest for those who spoke a language other than English or French at home and lowest for those who spoke French at home.[7] Retention rates for those who spoke English at home were 4 percent lower than the "Other" group and 10 percent higher than the French group.

Another survey reported that the percentage of students from non-English, non-French backgrounds who achieved B or higher averages in grade 11 ranged from 45.5 percent to 53.3 percent, compared to 35.6 percent of children whose fathers were born in the British Isles, and 38.1 percent of children whose fathers were Canadian-born.[8]

A note of caution is necessary in interpreting the results of these surveys. All the data for students born in Canada relates to students whose parents immigrated prior to the early 1960s. Thus, the relatively high levels of academic performance shown by these students cannot be generalized to students whose parents immigrated during the more recent influx of the late 1960s and early 1970s. More recent data show minority-language students in Metropolitan Toronto elementary schools performing poorly in English academic skills.[9] However, these students were of low SES, and some were born outside Canada. Thus, the Canadian data reported above should be interpreted as indicating that it is possible for minority-language students to perform extremely well academically under certain conditions; these findings, however, cannot be generalized to all Canadian minority-language students.

In summary, the available evidence suggests that, with the exception of the Franco-Ontarian group, minority students born in Canada tend to show a relatively high level of academic achievement in English-only programs. These findings contrast with the low levels of achievement shown by many minority groups in L2-only schools in other contexts.

Reasons for Success or Failure of Minority Students in L2-Only Programs

The variation in academic performance shown by different groups of minority students from the same socioeconomic backgrounds and under the same educational conditions can be understood in relation to the different patterns of bilingualism and cultural identity developed by students. Those students who perform well in L2-only schools tend to be highly motivated to learn L2 and to identify with the majority culture (patterns 1 and 4). This orientation appears to characterize most immigrant groups in Canada, who usually place a high value on education and encourage their children to do likewise. These groups frequently, but not invariably, have a strong sense of pride in their own cultural backgrounds.[10]

By contrast, those groups that have been found to perform poorly in L2-only schools appear to be characterized by ambivalence towards the majority group and insecurity about the value of their own cultures (patterns 2 and 3). On the one hand, they know that learning the majority language is necessary for economic success; however, on the other hand, they often feel hostile towards the majority culture because they feel that members of the majority group regard their culture as inferior and not worth preserving. The result is that parents may not strongly encourage their children to maintain their L1 and identify with the home culture because they partially accept the stigma of inferiority and suspect that the attempt to avoid assimilation may be futile. However, they may also feel unable to provide adequate encouragement to their children to develop high levels of proficiency in L2 because this will accelerate the replacement of L1 and the rejection of the home culture by the child.

Consider, for example, the following description of Finnish immigrants in Sweden given by Heyman, a Swedish researcher:

> many Finns in Sweden feel an aversion, and sometimes even hostility, towards the Swedish language and refuse to learn it or learn it under protest. There is repeated evidence of this, as there is, on the other hand, of Finnish people – children and adults – who are ashamed of their Finnish language and do not allow it to live and develop.[11]

The same pattern of ambivalence or hostility towards the majority cultural group and insecurity about one's own language and culture is found, to a greater or lesser extent, in other minority groups that have tended to perform poorly in school; for example, North American Indians and Spanish-speakers in the United States, and Franco-Ontarians.

How does this pattern of parental ambivalence towards home and majority cultures get translated into school failure among minority-language children? First, obviously, these same attitudes get transmitted (probably unconsciously) to the children so that they are not strongly motivated to learn either language. Teachers may contribute to this pattern either through low expectations of the child's ability to learn L2 or through insensitivity towards the child's cultural background.

However, a second way in which the home environment affects the child's school performance is through the linguistic stimulation (or lack of it) that children receive in L1. If parents are ashamed of their cultural background or feel they speak an inferior dialect of L1, they may not strongly encourage children to develop L1 skills in the home. For example, they may communicate with the child only when necessary, or use a mixture of L1 and L2 in the home. Thus, children's L1 abilities (that is, the development of concepts and thinking skills in L1) may be poorly developed on entry to school. This leaves children without a conceptual basis for learning L2 in an L2-only school situation, and consequently they may achieve only low levels of proficiency (for example, reading skills) in both languages.

In summary, minority-language children will tend to perform well in school when they are highly motivated to learn the majority language and to identify with the majority culture. Parental encouragement to do this is extremely important. However, parents will be unable to provide adequate encouragement when they feel hostile towards the majority group and insecure about the value of their own culture. In these cases, children's performance in school, as well as the proficiency they develop in both languages, will tend to reflect the ambivalent attitude of their parents and the pattern of linguistic interaction they have experienced in the home.

In the previous sections, minority students' performance in L2-only programs has been considered. The next section will examine the effects of incorporating students' L1 into the educational program, whether for "survival" or "enrichment" purposes.

Effects of Promoting Minority Students' L1 in Schools

Those who oppose the teaching of students' L1 in the public elementary school frequently argue that the promotion of L1 will impede the development of English academic skills. This has also been a concern of some parents of minority students. Common sense would suggest that reducing the amount of English instructional time would result in lower achievement in English. However, evaluations of bilingual programs for minority students conducted in many countries show clearly that there is no basis for this "common sense" assumption.

The following four examples illustrate the results of these evaluations. The first two use L1 as a major medium of instruction, primarily to promote educational survival among minority students; educational enrichment through language and culture maintenance is the primary goal in the other two.

1. **Rock Point Navajo Study.** Before the bilingual program was started in 1971, children were two years behind U.S. norms in English reading by the end of grade 6, despite intensive teaching of English as a second language. The bilingual program used Navajo as the major medium of instruction from kindergarten through grade 2, and continued its use throughout elementary school for between 25 and 50 percent of the instruction. English-reading instruction was delayed until Navajo reading skills were well established (mid-grade 2). By the end of grade 6, children in the bilingual program were performing slightly *above* U.S. grade norms in English reading despite considerably less exposure to English instruction than previously.[12]

One wonders to what extent similarly well-implemented programs for Canadian Native children might achieve equivalent results.

2. **Sodertalje Program for Finnish Immigrant Children in Sweden.** The findings of this evaluation are very similar to those of the Rock Point Navajo evaluation. Finnish children in Swedish-only programs had been found to perform worse in Finnish than approximately 90 percent of equivalent socioeconomic status Finnish children in Finland, and worse in Swedish than about 90 percent of Swedish children. The Sodertalje program, however, used Finnish as the major initial language of instruction and continued its use throughout elementary school, although Swedish became the major language of instruction from grade 3. By grade 6, children's performance in this program in both Finnish and Swedish was almost at the same level as that of Swedish-speaking children in Finland, which was a considerable improvement in both languages compared to their performance in Swedish-only programs.[13]

3. **Manitoba Francophone Study.** A large-scale study carried out by Hébert et al. among grades 3, 6, and 9 minority francophone students in Manitoba who were receiving varying amounts of instruction through the medium of French found that the amount of French-medium instruction showed no relationship to children's achievement in English.[14] In other words, francophone students receiving 80 percent instruction in French and 20 percent instruction in English did just as well *in English* as students receiving 80 percent instruction in English and 20 percent in French. However, amount of instruction in French was positively related to achievement in French. In other words, instruction through French benefited students' French at no cost to their progress in English.

4. **Edmonton Ukrainian-English Bilingual Program.** The evaluations of this program in which 50 percent of the instruction is given in Ukrainian throughout elementary school have shown no detrimental effects on the development of children's English or other academic skills; in fact, by grade 5, students in the program had pulled ahead of the comparison group in English reading skills.[15] A study carried out with grades 1 and 3 students revealed that students who were relatively fluent in Ukrainian as a result of parents using it consistently in the home were significantly better able to detect ambiguities in *English* sentence structure than either equivalent unilingual English-speaking children not in the program or children in the program who came from predominantly English-speaking homes.[16]

In summary, the results of research conducted in Canada and elsewhere show that minority children's L1 proficiency can be promoted in school at no cost to the development of proficiency in L2.

Attempts to explain the success of bilingual programs in promoting L2 academic skills for minority students who tend to perform poorly in L2-only programs have emphasized two major factors:

(1) Learning L2 no longer threatens students' identity, because the use of their L1 in the school gives them pride in their own cultural background and reinforces their self-concept.

(2) The use of L1 as the language of instruction builds on the linguistic and intellectual skills which students bring to the school. Thus, students are able to benefit fully from interaction with the teacher, and when instruction in L2 is introduced, they can use the concepts and knowledge developed in L1 to make the

L2 input comprehensible. In other words, concepts developed in L1 can be easily transferred to L2, given adequate exposure to L2 either in school or in the wider environment. These factors are considered in more detail in Chapter 4.

Although detailed evaluations of programs which teach heritage languages for several hours per week (for example, the Ontario Heritage Languages Program) have not been carried out, it is clear that there is little basis for the concerns of some teachers and parents that students' English skills will suffer as a result of the teaching of L1. If programs which use L1 as the language of instruction for the major part of the school day (such as those involving Navajo and Finnish, discussed above) significantly *help* children acquire proficiency in the majority language, it is unlikely that teaching for 2½ hours per week will have any negative effects.

There is also considerable evidence that, in addition to helping minority students survive educationally, promotion of L1 proficiency can significantly benefit students' intellectual functioning.

Bilingualism as a Positive Force in Children's Intellectual and Educational Development

In the past, researchers and educators have tended to regard bilingualism as a major cause of the poor school performance of some groups of minority children. There appeared to be strong evidence for this belief because of the many minority-language children who showed low levels of proficiency (for example, reading skills) in both languages. Certainly the low level of proficiency which these children had in the languages of instruction contributed to their educational difficulties. However, as pointed out earlier, these difficulties should be attributed not to bilingualism itself, but rather to the *lack* of full bilingualism and the attempts of school systems to eradicate bilingualism in minority children.

A very different picture emerges when we examine the effects of bilingualism among children whose proficiency in both languages has continued to develop. Many recent research studies suggest that under these circumstances bilingualism can enhance intellectual and educational abilities. These studies have reported positive effects of bilingualism in five areas: (1) ability to analyse and become aware of language; (2) overall academic language skills (for example, reading and writing); (3) general conceptual development; (4) creative thinking; and (5) sensitivity to communicative needs of the listener.[17]

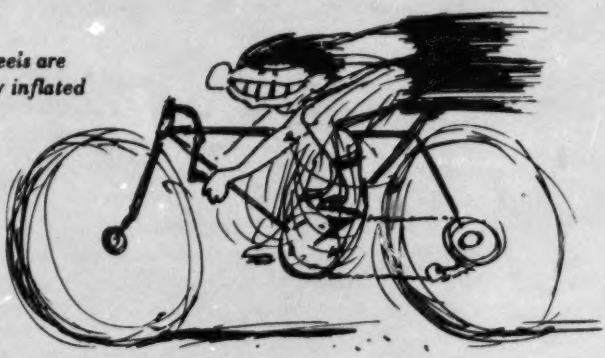
This type of finding is not at all surprising when one considers what is involved in becoming bilingual. In gaining control over two language systems, the bilingual child has had to decipher much more language input than the unilingual child, who has been exposed to only one language system. Thus, the bilingual child has had more practice in analysing meanings that the unilingual child.

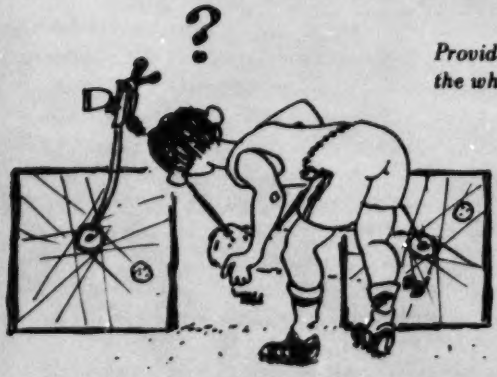
In general, the beneficial effects of bilingualism on intellectual functioning that have been reported have been fairly subtle and do not represent large-scale enhancement of children's intellectual ability. Nevertheless, these effects have been consistently reported in situations where bilingual children's thinking abilities are developed in both languages, and they clearly add to the obvious personal advantages of bilingualism to the individual.

One wheel can get you places. . . .

So can a big wheel and a little wheel. . . .

However, when your wheels are nicely balanced and fully inflated you'll go further. . . .





Provided, of course, the people who made the wheels knew what they were doing. . . .

In conclusion, the effects of bilingualism on children's educational and intellectual growth depend very much on the type of bilingualism that is developed. Where children develop low levels of proficiency – for example, small vocabulary, incomplete grammatical knowledge, low levels of reading and writing skills – in both languages, educational and intellectual progress will be slowed down. However, where children's abilities in both languages are relatively well developed (not necessarily equal), then there is evidence that bilingualism can enhance intellectual functioning. Where children develop a high level (that is, age-appropriate) of proficiency in one of their languages and a relatively low level of proficiency in the other language, neither positive nor negative effects would be expected. This may be the situation for some minority-language children in Canadian schools whose L1 proficiency declines rapidly after the start of school. However, other children, who develop their L1 proficiency either through the efforts of parents or through heritage-language classes, may fall into the second category of advantageous bilingualism.

Facilitation in Learning Additional Languages

Although relatively little research has been conducted on this issue, the available evidence suggests that bilingualism facilitates the learning of additional languages. For example, the French Department of the Toronto Board of Education informally observed that

> students who are learning French as a third language perform better than children who are learning French as a second language. Somehow the learning of a third language is facilitated by the learning of a second.[18]

Research evidence in support of this observation is provided by the findings of a study which investigated the learning of French by children from minority-language (mainly Italian) backgrounds in Metropolitan Toronto.[19] Grades 4, 5, and 6 children from minority-language backgrounds who had twenty minutes of French a day since grade 1 performed significantly better on a French listening comprehension test than children from English-only home backgrounds. This finding is especially remarkable since the minority-language children came from lower SES families and had significantly worse English academic skills than the English background students. Similar results have been reported in other studies involving Italian students in Toronto and Ottawa.[20] However, it is not clear from these studies whether the advantage of the bilinguals is due to bilingualism itself or to specific transfer of vocabulary, and so on, between Italian and French, which are quite similar languages. It is also not possible to say whether the advantage is just a temporary advantage in the initial stages of learning or whether it is more permanent.

A recent small-scale study carried out by Orpwood suggests that more than just specific transfer across similar languages is involved in explaining the bilinguals' superior performance.[21] She found that in grades 2 and 4 French immersion classes, children from "third" language backgrounds performed consistently better in both French and other academic skills than children from English-only backgrounds. All the children in this study were from middle to upper socioeconomic backgrounds and a wide variety of language backgrounds was represented.

The research findings considered in previous sections show that promoting the de-

velopment of minority children's L1 in the school program contributes to their acquisition of L2 academic skills as well as to their overall intellectual growth. A similar pattern of results emerges from research on the use of minority students' L1 in the home.

Mother Tongue Development in the Home

Several studies show that the use of a minority language in the home is not a handicap to children's academic progress. This was evident in the Cummins and Mulcahy study in the Ukrainian bilingual program,[22] and it can also be inferred from the findings in Table 2 (p. 18) that minority students born in Canada who learned English as a second language performed as well or better on all academic tasks compared to Canadian-born students for whom English was a first language.

The same conclusion emerges in a recent study of Italian immigrant children in Montreal conducted by Bhatnagar.[23] This study examined the academic progress of 171 immigrant children in English-language elementary schools, and 102 in French-language schools in relation to language spoken at home and with friends and siblings. Bhatnagar sums up his findings as follows:

> The results reported here do not support the popular assumption that the more immigrant children speak the local language the better their adjustment to the host culture. It is interesting to note that immigrant children who used Italian and a Canadian language interchangeably were better even at English or French, of both the spoken and written variety, than children who used English or French all the time. . . . Language retention . . . should lead to higher academic adjustment, better facility in the host language, and better social relations of immigrant children.[24]

Several reasons can be suggested to explain why children who maintain their L1 proficiency, despite peer group pressure to use English (or French) exclusively, perform better academically. First, as outlined earlier, there is considerable research evidence that bilingualism positively influences children's intellectual and academic development. Second, minority children who are comfortable in their emotional adjustment

to both the majority culture and the culture of the home perform better academically than those who are ambivalent to either home or majority cultures or to both. Obviously, language retention is an important aspect of a child's adjustment to the home culture.

The third reason concerns the quality of parent-child communication in the home. In a longitudinal study recently conducted in England, Wells has shown that children's acquisition of reading skills in school is strongly related to the extent to which parents responded to and expanded upon the child's utterances.[25] If parents are not comfortable in English, the quality of their interaction with their children in English is likely to be less than in L1. Thus, teachers should be extremely cautious about advising minority parents to switch to English in the home. Whether the language of the home is the same or different from the language of the school matters very little in comparison to the quality of the interaction children experience with adults.

In conclusion, it is clear that the research results on the effects of bilingualism and L1 development run counter to the intuitive beliefs of many parents and teachers who feel that any time spent on L1 will detract from children's English skills. Contrary to this assumption, it appears that the development of L1 skills both in home and school carries significant educational advantages for minority students. In order to understand why the promotion of L1 does not lead to lower levels of proficiency in English, it is necessary to examine the implicit model of bilingualism which gives rise to this expectation and replace it with a model which can more adequately account for the research findings.

4

Theory

The Balance Effect Theory

The belief that promoting skills in one of a bilingual's two languages would inevitably lead to a decrease in proficiency in the other is known as the Balance Effect theory. There are two major assumptions in the Balance Effect theory which are illustrated in Figure 1. First, the theory assumed that there was only so much linguistic capacity available and therefore sharing it between two languages would lead to lower levels of proficiency in each language compared to unilingual speakers of each. This assumption is illustrated in Figure 1 by the fact that as one of the bilingual's linguistic "balloons"

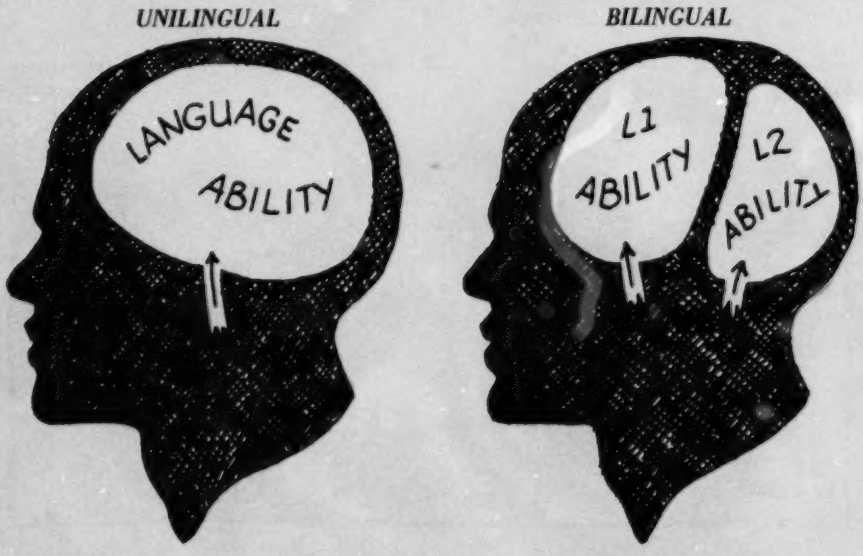


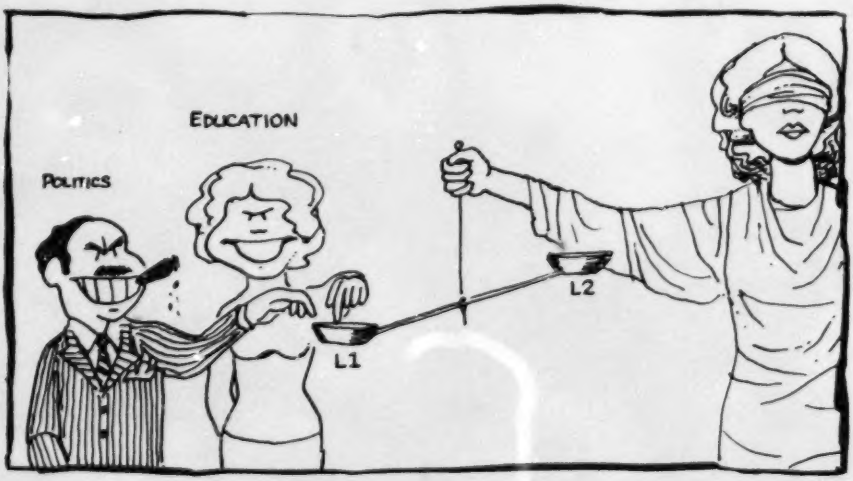
Figure 1/According to the Balance Effect Theory: Double Talk = Double Think

gets inflated, less room is left for the other. Linguistic ability here refers to the ability to use language as an instrument of thought, and includes such things as reading skills, vocabulary and concept knowledge, and so on.

The second assumption of the Balance Effect theory is that the two balloons or sets of linguistic abilities are separate. Therefore, stimulation of one means that the other is not being stimulated and will consequently decline in relation to the language ability of unilingual speakers of that language. Thus, the theory would predict that teaching minority-language children through the medium of L1 would result in lower levels of L2 skills as compared to minority-language children taught through the medium of L2. It is clear that the psychoeducational argument against teaching heritage languages outlined in Chapter 1 is based on an implicit "Balance Effect" model of bilingual proficiency.

When applied to the educational problems of minority-language children, the Balance Effect theory appeared plausible, because it was evident that as children acquired L2 skills their L1 skills declined. It was also convenient for educators to blame children's L1 for their failure to acquire adequate L2 skills.

However, as outlined earlier, the Balance Effect appears plausible only because of particular societal and educational influences, and has very little to do with the relationship between a bilingual's two languages. When the societal and educational influences are changed, it becomes obvious that the Balance Effect theory cannot fit the facts. For example, if the theory were valid, then the Navajo Indian children in Rock Point should have performed worse in English when half their instruction was given in Navajo; yet they performed much better in English after the bilingual program was started. Similarly, children in the Ukrainian-English bilingual program in Edmonton should perform only about half as well in English as children who have all their instruction in English; yet they perform just as well, and even show some subtle advantages in their appreciation of English word meanings.



Society and schools made the balance effect theory look credible

The Think Tank Model

To recapitulate, the main research findings that require explanation are:

1. Time spent through the medium of minority children's L1 either in home or at school does not in any way impede the development of L2 academic skills.
2. Promoting the development of minority children's L1 skills in the school significantly improves L2 academic skills among minority children who tend to perform poorly in L2-only schools.
3. Bilingualism and biliteracy appear to confer intellectual and academic advantages on the individual when proficiency in both languages continues to develop.

The Think Tank model attempts to provide a framework within which these findings can be interpreted.

Figure 2/The Think Tank Model: Double Talk ≠ Double Think

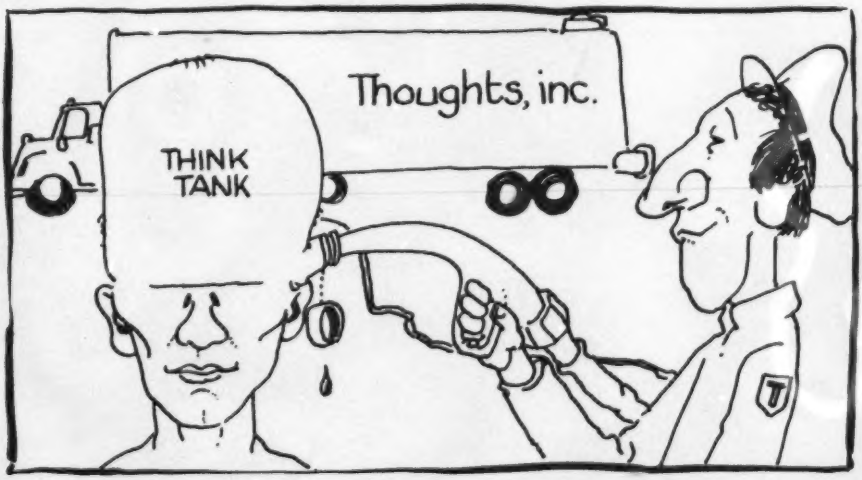
The model makes the following three assumptions. First, talking usually reflects thinking, and the thinking that underlies talk in L1 is essentially the same as the thinking that underlies talk in L2. In other words, there is only one Think Tank which formulates thoughts that are expressed in both L1 and L2 as well as comprehends other people's thoughts that are expressed in both L1 and L2.

Second, although the same basic ability underlies the processing of meanings in L1 and L2, these meanings are not always directly translatable across languages. For example, "love" and "amour" are very likely to have different connotations for a French-English bilingual depending upon where and how his or her experiences were. We know from research conducted by Paul Kolers of the University of Toronto that concrete objects that people in different countries manipulate in similar ways (for example, pencils, books, and so on) have similar meanings in a bilingual's two languages.[1] However, abstract concepts (freedom and justice, for example) and feelings (love, guilt, and so on) will often have somewhat different meanings in the two languages. Thus, some information or operations (for example, arithmetical calculations) may be

much easier to express in one of the bilingual's two languages depending upon the exposure to that information. However, the important point is that all the information is stored in the same Think Tank, and the individual potentially has access to (can inspect) all the information so stored.

A third assumption of the Think Tank model is that an individual's experience with language is extremely important for the operation and development of the Think Tank. Thus, understanding, speaking, reading, and writing *either language* contributes to the development of the *total* Think Tank. However, if an individual's proficiency in one of the languages is low, then the amount and quality of both input and output flowing between the Think Tank and the environment through that channel will be reduced. In minority-language children (for example, Finns in Sweden), if both linguistic channels remain relatively restricted over a prolonged period of time in the type of input and output that can be handled, then growth of the Think Tank will slow down and eventually stagnate.

The three assumptions of the Think Tank model can be summarized as follows: although the linguistic contents of the Think Tank often retain specific L1 or L2 characteristics (that is, they do not become linguistically homogenized), the same mental expertise underlies performance (namely, processing of input and output) in both languages. The quantity and quality of the linguistic input and of the feedback received from linguistic output in both languages is an important stimulus for the growth of the *total* Think Tank.



Operating the Think Tank

Here we come to the functions of the Think Tank manager, whose main duty is to regulate the input and output of information in both languages and keep the operation running smoothly. The manager has three main control functions. First is the *inspection and monitoring control*, whereby the contents of the Think Tank can be inspected and, where necessary, attempts can be made consciously to modify these contents. For

example, bilinguals can compare the specific meanings that "amour" and "love" have for them. The grammar of each language and the different ways in which the same thoughts are expressed in each language can also be compared. When grammatical mistakes are brought to the individual's attention, attempts can be made to monitor and correct these errors. The application of this function to two language stores is one of the ways in which bilinguals may experience a subtle advantage over unilinguals in appreciation of word meanings and awareness of how language itself works.

The second function of the manager is to operate the *switch control* whereby the input or output of one language can be turned off and the other turned on. For example, bilinguals may start an utterance in L1 and finish it in L2; or at a party, an individual may alternate between listening to an English conversation in his or her own group and a Spanish conversation in a neighboring group.

The first two control functions are concerned with the internal operation of the Think Tank. The third is concerned with motivational influences on its operation. Here the manager must decide on policy and implement it through the *valve control*. The valve control regulates the flow of input to and output from the Think Tank. Thus, if a minority-language student is anxious to quickly replace L1 by L2, she or he can shut down the L1 valve and open the L2 valve as fully as possible. The account on page 13 illustrates how the L1 valve can be reopened "if I get interested in what they are saying." It seems likely that the poor performance of, for example, Navajo Indian and Finnish immigrant children in L2, when all instruction is through L2, is due to a partial closure of the L2 valve caused by negative attitudes towards the L2 community. If the L2 valve is partially closed, and there is little stimulation coming in through the L1 valve, then growth in the Think Tank will be relatively sluggish.

Applying the Think Tank Model

The reasons why instruction through L1 for minority-language children is just as, or more, effective in promoting L2 skills as instruction through L2 can be easily described in terms of the model. Contrary to the assumptions of many parents and teachers, minority children's educational performance in L2 is not determined only by experience in L2; instead, it is determined by the entire store of linguistic and conceptual knowledge in the Think Tank which is derived from the totality of the child's experience in *both* languages.

The importance of previous conceptual information or subject matter knowlege for comprehending meaning in L2 can be illustrated by a relatively common occurrence for anybody who has developed partial skills in a second language. Imagine that you have an intermediate level of French proficiency and are listening to a lecture on Canadian politics, a subject in which you are passionately interested. It is quite likely that you will understand a considerable amount of what is being said because of your knowledge of the events and context of what is being discussed. You will undoubtedly understand much more than you would in a lecture on French politics, a subject in which you have very little knowledge and less interest.

In the same way, programs which teach through the medium of L1 are not just developing fluency in L1, they are also developing the underlying conceptual and academic skills (subject matter knowledge) which are necessary for academic develop-

ment in English. Of course, adequate exposure to L2 is necessary; however, because L2 is the language of the environment, the minority child usually receives an enormous amount of stimulation in L2 through TV, other children, and so on. Thus, a minority child who develops conceptual knowledge and reading skills in L1 as a result of instruction mainly through L1 at school will usually have little difficulty transferring this knowledge to L2. However, even where instruction through L2 is effective in developing a high level of conceptual knowledge in minority children, this knowledge will usually not transfer to L1, because of lack of exposure to literate uses of L1 (reading and writing) and also lack of motivation to develop L1 (closure of the L1 valve to the Think Tank).

The final chapter considers the practical implications of the research findings for heritage-language teachers and minority parents anxious to promote the development of high levels of L1 proficiency.

5

Practice

Why and How Children Learn Languages

The central reason why babies learn a first language is to communicate with other people who play some important role in their immediate environment (for example, feed them). However, in their first year of life, before they can understand or produce words, babies become very sensitive to the meanings of nonlinguistic aspects of the communicative situation, for example, facial expressions (smiling), gestures (pointing), tone of voice, and so on. The meanings of words are learnt by linking up the meaning of a particular situation (for example, adult dresses baby for a walk) with the words that the adult usually produces in that situation (for example, "We're going for a *walk* now"). Thus, the child's extralinguistic knowledge plays a crucial role in making the linguistic input comprehensible. Gradually, as the child is exposed to more comprehensible input, she or he will begin to try out words in these situations (for example, "walk") and the adult will delightedly respond and amplify the child's utterance, thereby providing both feedback as to the appropriateness of the utterance as well as more linguistic input to the child.

Minority-language children pick up L2 in much the same way in the street and/or in school. First, there is a period which can range from several days to several months when the child says very little in L2 but tries to decipher the L2 utterances of others through linking up the utterance with the meaning of the situation. Then words and phrases will be tried out and the effects of these utterances will be observed. Utterances which are not appropriate or don't have the expected effects will be modified until gradually the words and the rules for combining them (grammar) begin to fit together into an organized system that gradually approximates that of a native-speaker of L2.

The amount of time necessary to acquire mastery of a second (or first) language will depend on the extent to which individuals have the opportunity and inclination to interact with competent users of the language. It is thus not surprising that immigrant children usually learn the second language more rapidly than their parents since, typically, they have much more exposure to the language than their parents.

Implications for Teaching Heritage Languages

The central point made in the preceding section is that languages exist for communicating meaning, and are therefore best learned in situations where meanings are being communicated and learners are interested in what is being communicated. This is why so much second (or third) language learning that goes on in schools produces disappointing results (for example, learning another language for twenty minutes per day). The learner is not exposed to speakers of the language who have something important or meaningful to communicate. Instead, teachers often try to teach components of the language in isolation from the whole (for example, past tense, masculine gender, how to form plurals, and so on). This type of teaching can form a useful supplement for learners (especially adults and older children) who are exposed to natural communicative situations in the language outside the classroom. However, without this meaningful exposure, it will be sterile and counter-productive, especially for younger students.

There is one overriding principle that applies to heritage-language classes, whether organized by communities or school boards. *Children should find the classes interesting and enjoyable.* Otherwise the motivational valve to the Think Tank will close down and not much learning will occur. Perhaps the main way in which these classes are effective is in *motivating* children to maintain and develop L1 rather than replacing it by English. If the classes are made boring through an overemphasis on grammar and memorization, then children will have very little desire to develop their proficiency and will resent rather than have pride in the L1. Heritage-language classes will be most effective when they use the heritage language as a vehicle for transmitting the culture rather than trying to teach the language in isolation from the culture. In other words, teachers must find ways of incorporating some of the communicative methodology of bilingual programs into the heritage-language class. Some of the ways in which this can be achieved are outlined in other handbooks in the present series.[1]

A language is more than the sum of its parts and should be taught as such

One further point that needs to be stressed about the teaching of heritage languages

concerns the question of dialect. Many children in heritage-language classes speak a dialect of L1, and teachers sometimes feel that they must eliminate this "inferior" form in order to teach the standard form. Often children are told that the forms they have learned at home are wrong and the teacher attempts to make children replace these "incorrect" forms with the standard "correct" form. However, what teachers may inadvertently communicate to children is that their parents are not only unable to speak an adequate form of English, they are also incapable of speaking their L1 properly. Thus, it is extremely important that heritage-language teachers do not attempt to eradicate the dialect; instead, they should communicate to children that the dialect and standard are both valid forms of the language which are appropriate for different contexts. If the teacher consistently uses the standard form while accepting student utterances in the dialect, students will gradually shift to using the standard in the school context. This orientation is, of course, a prerequisite for any genuine communicative teaching. If teachers are constantly correcting students' utterances, very little real communication will take place in the classroom, and consequently, very little development of language skills will occur.

Promoting the Development of Children's L1 in the Home

The first decision that must be made by parents, one or both of whom speak a minority language, is whether or not they want their children to become bilingual and, if so, what degree of bilingualism do they want their children to develop. For example, do they want their children to develop full literacy skills in L1, or is the maintenance of speaking and listening skills sufficient? This question is obviously linked to *why* parents want their children to become bilingual. A large variety of reasons are possible: for example, to maintain communication within the immediate family and with grandparents and other relatives; to develop better appreciation of their cultural background; to ensure the survival of the minority-language community; to help children readjust if the family returns to the country of origin, because bilingualism will be an advantage in looking for a job, or because bilingualism will enrich children personally by giving them access to two cultural groups (for example, two literatures).

The point is that if parents know what their objectives are, they can take the necessary steps to realize these objectives. Bilingualism does not develop automatically just because one language is spoken at home and another in the school and wider environment. Unless special steps are taken to promote the development of the minority language, there will be a strong tendency to replace it by the more prestigious majority language. If language use in the home is haphazard and unplanned, with frequent alternation of languages by the same person speaking to the child, the minority language is unlikely to develop adequately.

Thus, there are certain principles which parents should observe if they want their children to maintain the L1 and become fully bilingual:

First, *language is learnt through communication*. Therefore, parents must spend time with their children, enjoy them, and talk with them about things which are of mutual interest. This principle applies just as much to the one-year-old as to the six-year-old. Roger Brown, a prominent authority on language development from Harvard University, answers the question of "How can a concerned mother facilitate her child's learning of language?" as follows:

> Believe that your child can understand more than he or she can say, and seek, above all, to communicate. To understand and be understood. . . . There is no set of rules of how to talk to a child that can even approach what you unconsciously know. If you concentrate on communicating, everything else will follow.[2]

Naturally, this advice applies just as much to fathers as to mothers.

Communication between parents and children is extremely important in homes where children are being raised bilingually

Second, *children should be exposed to communication in L1 as much as possible.* When parents speak L1 between themselves, they should also speak L1 to their children. This is obviously necessary if L1 is to develop fully; however, the principle carries the important implication that it is not necessary to use English in the home. Parents (and teachers) sometimes feel that English rather than L1 should be used in the home in order to help children learn English; at best, this is not necessary, and at worst, it can have very harmful effects. Children whose L1 proficiency has been well developed in the home will have little difficulty acquiring English from exposure to it in the wider environment, and there is evidence that their bilingualism will give them some educational advantages over the course of their school careers. Using English for communicating with children will certainly not do any harm *if parents can provide the same quality of communication in English as they can in the L1*. However, often parents are less comfortable in English than in their L1 and consequently the quality of communication between parents and children suffers. The result is slower development of children's Think Tanks since the linguistic input is of a lower quality. It is clear that the assumptions of parents and teachers who advise the use of English in the home are based on the Balance Effect theory which just doesn't fit the facts.

However, by the same token, it is not necessary for parents to shield children from exposure to English on TV or in the street. It makes much more sense for parents to think positively rather than negatively. In other words, rather than prohibiting children from watching, for example, "Sesame Street" on TV or playing with English-speaking

children on the street, parents should seek out interesting activities which expose their children to L1. Ways of doing this are for parents, relatives, friends, or older siblings to tell stories, folk tales, riddles, jokes, and so on, from the L1 culture to the children; reading to the children in L1; watching TV programs in L1 together with the children; and participating in L1 cultural or community activities. In short, parents must ensure that knowing L1 has some pay-off for the child. There must be things that the child enjoys doing that she or he can do in L1 but could not do in English. Otherwise, why should the child make the effort (and it often *is* an effort) to maintain L1 listening and speaking skills?

Obviously, this encouragement of L1 development is not in any way incompatible with encouraging the child to do well in school and in learning English. In other words, parents should encourage each of their children's languages and cultures to enrich the other rather than being afraid that each will detract from the other.

Third, *parents should be consistent in their use of languages to their children*. This principle follows from the second. Alternating between languages from one time to the next may tend to confuse children. In learning a language, children not only have to work out what the individual words mean, but also how to combine those words to make meaningful utterances which observe grammatical rules, and which are appropriate to the context in which they are uttered. It will be more difficult for children to work out the grammatical rules of each language when they are exposed to a mixture of both languages in the same context.

Fourth, *each language should be associated with a specific context*. This principle is similar to the third, but is especially relevant to the situation where parents consciously decide to expose their child to two languages in the home. This situation may arise when each parent speaks a different language to the child or where both parents speak both languages to the child. Thus, when each parent speaks a different language to the child, they should be consistent in their use of that language. If, for example, French and German are the languages in question, the father should always speak French to the child and the mother always German (or vice-versa). In this way the child associates each language with a particular person and knows which language to speak or listen for when communicating with that person. When language use in the home is mixed or haphazard, it is more difficult for the child to sort out the vocabulary and grammatical rules of each language.

The specific context in which each language is used does not matter so long as it is clearly defined and consistently used. One person, one language, is perhaps the most common pattern. Another arrangement which works well when both parents are bilingual is to use different languages on different floors of the house. For example, French might be used upstairs and Italian downstairs. The permutations increase when the language of the wider environment and the language of schooling enter the picture. One of the languages spoken at home may or may not be the language of the wider community. For example, French and German may be spoken at home and English may be the language of the community. One family in Edmonton, Alberta, speaks Armenian at home, the children go to a French immersion school, and they picked up English in the environment. In another family in Edmonton, one parent speaks German

to the children, the other speaks Ukrainian, and the children go to the Ukrainian-English bilingual program. In addition, they receive German instruction in Saturday morning school.

Each language should be associated with a specific context

In all these cases the parents were confident that trilingualism was possible for their children and were aware of how to go about achieving this objective. They were aware that it was desirable to keep the languages separate, each one associated with a particular context, and also that it was not necessary to be concerned with their children's acquisition of English, provided there was adequate communication between parents and children in the home language(s). Children exposed to this type of linguistic environment often do very well in school, probably because parents are aware of the necessity to promote strongly the minority language(s) in the home. Thus, they may tend to spend more time than parents in an English unilingual home in communicating with their children and stimulating the development of children's overall conceptual knowledge.

In the initial stages, children exposed to two languages in the home may have less vocabulary in each than unilingual children. This is not surprising since the child has been exposed to less of each language than unilingual children. Research studies have suggested, however, that children exposed to two languages in the home make more rapid progress in overall development of concepts. It seems likely that in the early grades of school (or before), children's transfer mechanisms will start to operate efficiently so that new vocabulary input in L1 will be a stimulus to seek out the equivalent words in L2 and vice-versa. However, parents should be aware that children's vocabulary in each language is likely to be less than that of unilingual children in the initial stages of acquisition and, consequently, that it is necessary to provide adequate stimulation in each language. Where parents do stimulate the child (for example, read aloud to

the child, explain things, play with the child, and so on) in each language, children from bilingual homes soon catch up with unilinguals in vocabulary knowledge, depending of course on relative degree of exposure to each language outside the home. If English and German are the languages of the home, English proficiency will soon outstrip German proficiency because of the predominance of English in the environment. However, the child would likely have little trouble catching up with unilingual German speakers if the family moved to Germany.

What if parents would like their children to become bilingual, but do not feel fully comfortable in the minority language? This is sometimes the case with second-generation parents who have lost some of their ability in their mother tongue yet would like their children to become proficient in it. Under these conditions, should one or both parents use the minority language in communicating with their children? A principle which is applicable to this situation is that the major part of communication between parent and child should be in a language or languages in which the parent feels fully comfortable. This is simply because the quality of parent–child interaction is likely to suffer if the language of communication does not come naturally to the parent.

This does not of course mean that parents should never speak the minority language to their children. The proficiency which the parents have in the minority language and their pride in their cultural background will be a great stimulus to the child to acquire the language, and parents can supplement the linguistic input which children get from other sources. For example, grandparents are likely to speak the minority language more fluently than English, and they can be encouraged to speak it to the child. Parents also can use the minority language when visiting grandparents. This exposure will allow the child to pick up "an ear" for the language and start to develop basic vocabulary and grammar. In the home, parents could set aside a certain time of the day or a certain room in the house just for speaking Ukrainian in order to help develop these basic skills. However, in order for this type of "artificial" situation to succeed, it must be fun for the child. Enthusiasm and imagination on the part of the parents is necessary to make the situation into a game and encourage the child to use, and enjoy using, the language.

One of the most important ways that minority-language parents and teachers can encourage children's development in the mother tongue is by *reading stories* aloud to them. Many research studies have shown that children who are consistently read to in the home tend to develop higher overall language ability and do better in school than children who are not encouraged to read. Most public libraries in cities stock a good selection of children's books in languages other than English, and certain publishers (for example, Scholastic Publishers in Toronto) are now marketing children's books in heritage languages. Community organizations, school boards, and local libraries should be able to provide more information on where children's books in heritage languages can be located.

How should parents encourage the development of children's L1 when both parents are working? Obviously, if baby-sitters are available who speak L1 (for example, grandparents), there is little problem. However, this is often not the case; municipal day-care programs are solely in English and baby-sitters may speak a language other than either the child's L1 or English.

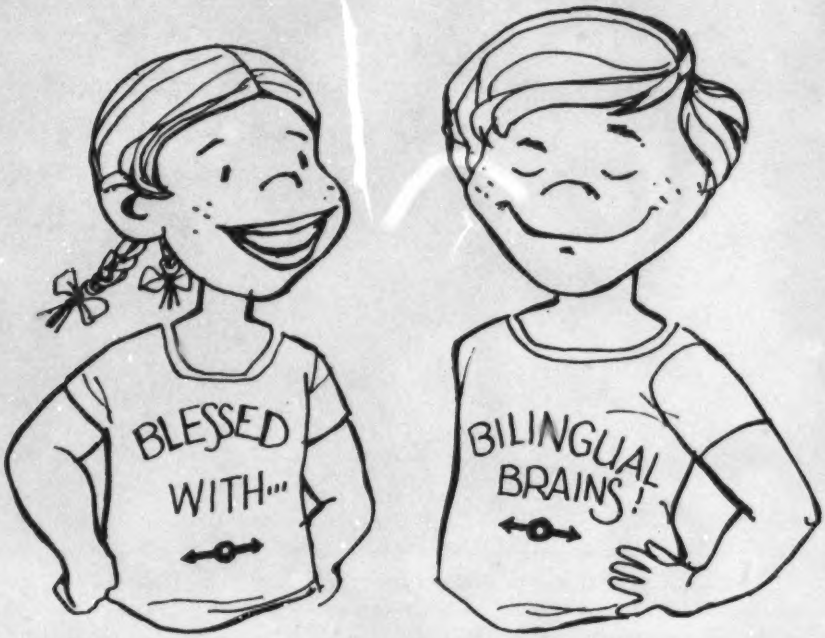
A worthwhile goal for minority communities to aim for under these conditions would be bilingual (or L1-only) nursery schools in which preschool children's L1 and conceptual abilities would be strongly promoted. This type of nursery school has been established by some community groups (for example, Ukrainians) in Metro Toronto and appears to function extremely well. Obviously, however, minority parents must be committed to L1 retention and convinced of the academic benefits of bilingualism in order to make this type of scheme succeed. What has been said up to now about parent-child interaction in L1 becomes even more important when the time available for promoting L1 in the home is reduced.

6

Conclusions

Clearly, bilingualism does not develop automatically in minority-language children, and parents may sometimes question whether it is worth the effort to try to maintain the mother tongue, especially if they fear that this might interfere in children's learning of English. This is a question which individual parents must decide for themselves; however, decisions should be made at an early stage of children's language development, not when the replacement process has already started. Also, decisions should be made in the light of what is known about bilingualism and children's development. This can be summarized as follows:

1. Minority-language children whose L1 proficiency on starting school is well-developed will usually have little difficulty acquiring high levels of English proficiency. However, children whose overall conceptual abilities in both L1 and L2 are poorly developed are likely to experience difficulty in school.
2. When both languages are well-developed, bilingualism seems to benefit some aspects of children's intellectual functioning; however, when neither language is well-developed, children are often at a disadvantage in school.
3. Poor development of both languages frequently occurs among minority-language children whose parents feel ashamed of their own language and culture, and ambivalent or even hostile to the majority language and culture. These children tend to perform very poorly in an L2-only school setting; however, research findings suggest that their school performance improves considerably when L1 is used as a medium of instruction for part of the school day.
4. These findings (and many others in different bilingual situations) clearly refute the "Balance Effect" theory, that is, that time devoted to one of a bilingual's two languages results in a decrease in proficiency in the other. Provided a bilingual is adequately exposed to both languages and is motivated to learn both, then performance in *either* L1 *or* L2 will be determined by the quality of total stimulation in *both* L1 *and* L2. What this means is that teaching through the medium of L1 for minority-language children is just as, or in some cases more,



effective in promoting L2 proficiency and overall conceptual abilities as instruction through L2. The opposite does not hold because motivation to learn and exposure to L1 is usually inadequate.

5. Minority-language parents should make a clear decision as to whether they want their children to be bilingual, and if so, what degree of bilingualism they desire their children to attain. If bilingualism is desired, parents must take an active role in encouraging their children to develop their L1 proficiency.
6. Heritage-language classes which children enjoy and find interesting are extremely valuable in helping children develop L1 proficiency. However, classes which children find boring and unpleasant will not motivate children to take pride in their culture and develop their L1 proficiency.

Notes

Chapter 1

1. V. Masemann, "Multicultural Programs in Toronto Schools," *Interchange*, 9 (1978-79):39.
2. *Ibid.*
3. J. Cummins, "Psychological Assessment of Minority Language Students," Research Report, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, October 1980.

Chapter 2

1. R. Harney and H. Troper, *Immigrants: A Portrait of the Urban Experience, 1890-1930* (Toronto: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1975), p. 110.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 110.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 118.
4. See V. Vildomec, *Multilingualism* (Leyden: A. W. Sythoff, 1963).
5. European Commission, "Activities for the education and vocational training of migrant workers and their families in the European community." Contribution to the Standing Conference of European Ministers of Education, 1978.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 15.
7. T. Skutnabb-Kangas, "Semilingualism and the Education of Migrant Children as a Means of Reproducing the Caste of Assembly Line Workers," in *Papers from the first Scandinavian-German Symposium on the Language of Immigrant Workers and Their Children*, eds. N. Dittmar, H. Haberland, T. Skutnabb-Kangas, and U. Teleman (Roskilde: Roligpapir, 1978), pp. 221-51.
8. European Commission (1978), p. 15.
9. EEC Council directive of 25 July, 1977, on the education of the children of migrant workers. *Official Journal of the European Communities*, August 6, 1977.
10. For an account of bilingual education in the United States, see G. R. Tucker and T. C. Gray, "The Pursuit of Equal Opportunity," *Language and Society*, 2 (1980): 5-8.

Chapter 3

1. Judy McClard and Naomi Wall (eds.), *Come with Us: Children Speak for Themselves*. Toronto: The Women's Educational Press, 1978.
2. W. E. Lambert, "A Social Psychology of Bilingualism," *Journal of Social Issues*, 23 (1967): 91-109.
3. W. E. Lambert, "Culture and Language as Factors in Learning and Education," in *Education of Immigrant Students*, ed. A. Wolfgang (Toronto: OISE, 1975), pp. 55-83.
4. M. V. Corsini, "The Student of Italian – Who Is He?", *Canadian Modern Language Review* (1975), pp. 424-27.
5. For a review of these studies, see J. Cummins, "The Role of the Primary Language in Promoting Educational Success for Language Minority Students," in *Compendium on Bilingual-*

Bicultural Education, eds. D. Dolson, M. Ortiz, and F. Tempes (Los Angeles: National Dissemination and Assessment Center, in press).

6. The data reported in Table 2 are taken from E. N. Wright, "Programme Placement Related to Selected Countries of Birth and Selected Languages." Research Report No. 99 (Toronto: Toronto Board of Education, 1971); and R. Deosaran, "The 1975 Every Student Survey." Research Report No. 140 (Toronto: Toronto Board of Education, 1976).
7. A. J. C. King and C. E. Angi, "Language and secondary school success." Report prepared for the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, 1968.
8. P. Anisef, "Consequences of Ethnicity for Educational Plans among Grade 12 Students," in *Education of Immigrant Students*, ed. A. Wolfgang (Toronto: OISE, 1975), pp. 122-36.
9. J. D. Feeney and N. J. Hartmann, *Learning Oral French: A Study of English-Speaking Elementary School Students* (Toronto: Metropolitan Separate School Board, Research Dept., 1977). (ONO1092)
10. K. G. O'Bryan, J. G. Reitz, and O. M. Kuplowska, *Non-Official Languages: A Study in Canadian Multiculturalism* (Ottawa: Supply and Services Canada, 1976).
11. Quoted in T. Skutnabb-Kangas and P. Toukomaa, *Teaching Migrant Children's Mother Tongue and Learning the Language of the Host Country in the Context of the Socio-Cultural Situation of the Migrant Family* (Helsinki: The Finnish National Commission for UNESCO, 1976).
12. P. Rosier and M. Farella, "Bilingual Education at Rock Point – Some Early Results," *TESOL Quarterly*, 10 (1976): 379-88.
13. G. Hanson, "The Position of the Second Generation of Finnish Immigrants in Sweden: The Importance of Education in the Home Language to the Welfare of Second Generation Immigrants." Paper presented at Symposium on the Position of the Second Generation of Yugoslav Immigrants in Sweden, Split, 1979.
14. R. Hébert et al. *Rendement académique et langue d'enseignement chez les élèves franco-manitobains* (Saint-Boniface, Manitoba: Centre de recherches du Collège Universitaire de Saint-Boniface, 1976).
15. Edmonton Public School Board. Evaluation of the Bilingual (English-Ukrainian) Program, Fifth Year. Research Report, 1979.
16. J. Cummins and R. Mulcahy, "Orientation to Language in Ukrainian-English Bilingual Children," *Child Development*, 49 (1978): 1239-42.
17. See Cummins, "The Role of the Primary Language" (1981) for a review of these studies.
18. P. S. Saif and M. E. Sheldon, *An Investigation of the Experimental French Programme at Bedford Park and Allenby Public Schools* (Toronto: Toronto Board of Education, 1969), p. 7.
19. J. D. Feeney and N. J. Hartmann, *Learning Oral French*.
20. For a review, see J. Cummins, "Theoretical Underpinnings of French Immersion." Unpublished manuscript, OISE, 1980.
21. S. Orpwood, "Trilingual Children in a French Immersion Program." Unpublished manuscript, OISE, 1980.
22. "Orientation to Language" (1978).
23. J. Bhatnagar, "Linguistic Behaviour and Adjustment of Immigrant Children in French and English Schools in Montreal," *International Review of Applied Psychology*, 29 (1980): 141-59.
24. *Ibid.*, pp. 153-55.
25. G. Wells, "Describing Children's Linguistic Development at Home and at School," *British Educational Research Journal*, 5 (1979): 75-89.

Chapter 4

1. P. Kolers, "Bilingualism and Information Processing," *Scientific American* (March, 1968), pp. 78-85.

Chapter 5

1. See the handbooks by Janice Yalden and Rebecca Ullmann in this series.
2. R. Brown, "Introduction," in *Talking to Children*, eds. C. E. Snow and C. A. Ferguson (Cambridge University Press, 1977), p. 26.

Further Reading

A short account of some of the research considered in the present handbook is provided in Jim Cummins, "Bilingualism and the ESL Student," *TESL Talk*, 1980, *11*, 8-13. A more technical account can be found in Jim Cummins, "The Cross-Lingual Dimensions of Language Proficiency: Implications for Bilingual Education and the Optimal Age Question," *TESOL Quarterly*, 1980, *14*, 175-87.

A special issue of the journal *Multiculturalism* on "Language and Language Programmes in Canada," December 1980, contains several articles relevant to language learning by minority-language children.

Good general accounts of issues related to second-language acquisition can be found in:

Steven Krashen, *Second language acquisition and second language learning* (London: Pergamon Press, 1981)

Barry McLaughlin, *Second language acquisition in childhood* (Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1978)

Two journals which focus on issues related to that of the present handbook are:

Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development, published by Tieto Ltd., 4 Bellevue Mansions, Bellevue Road, Clevedon, Avon BS21 7NU, England

The Canadian Modern Language Review, 4 Oakmount Road, Welland, Ontario L3C 4X8